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ABSTRACT

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Theoretical Paper No. 70

EDUCATIONAL REFORM AND THE PROBLEM OF INSTITUTIONAL LIFE

by

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Report from the Project on
Evaluation of Practices
in Individualized Schooling

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ABSTRACT

Discussion of educational reform/renewal involves consideration of the institutional characteristics of schooling. Schools have underlying patterns of conduct, belief, and values which provide meaning to the ongoing activities of learning. These patterns and assumptions of school life have tended to produce standardized educational experiences, emphasize certain knowledge which is technical rather than imaginative, and maintain noncritical and protective professional activities. Specific efforts toward institutional reform, such as Individually Guided Education, should consider their programmatic strategies (organizational designs, instructional models, or evaluation procedures) in relation to their impact upon the institutional quality of school life.

EDUCATIONAL REFORM AND THE PROBLEM OF INSTITUTIONAL LIFE

In the past three decades schools have been criticized for being psychologically alienating and intellectually impoverished. Many writers (for example, Levy, 1970) have stressed the negative school experiences of children living in poverty areas. Others, such as Alice Miel (Miel & Kiester, 1967), argued that the educational experience is impoverished in suburban, middle class schools as well. The crisis of schools, Miel asserted, is general and pervasive.

Response to this criticism was varied and extensive. The Federal Government infused money to institutionally alter and reform the schools. New curriculum projects emerged to develop materials in various subject matters. The "new" social studies, mathematics, and science curricula, for example, were designed to provide schools with more intellectually challenging and accurate content. Experiments began in organizational structures, such as team-teaching, open-space schools, and teacher centers. Millions of dollars were spent to provide knowledge and organizational forms that would improve the process of schooling.

The purpose of this paper is to focus upon the complex and profound task of educational reform by considering the institutional qualities of schooling. It will be argued that specific curriculum designs and organizational structures of educational reform must be considered in reference to the underlying systems of meaning and interpretation

provided through school interaction. Criterion-referenced measures, behavioral objectives or unitized classrooms often advocated as programs for reform are viewed here as technologies used in institutional contexts. The actual impact of these reform techniques upon schools is to be understood as it relates to the deeply held assumptions and patterns of behavior which underlie life in school. The reform efforts of Individually Guided Education will be explored as an example to provide a concrete focus to the discussion.

I. IGE AS REFORM RENEWAL

One of the more comprehensive plans for altering the elementary schools is Individually Guided Education (IGE). IGE was initiated in response to the criticism of schooling which emerged during the last decade. The civil rights movement of the 1960's and a post-Sputnik scrutiny of schools found that many schools in the country had poor academic programs, had low teacher expectations, and maintained practices that had negative consequences upon their students. Klausmeier, an originator of the concept of Individually Guided Education, suggested that these problems can be statistically illustrated. "One out of four students has a significant reading deficiency, one-half of our unemployed youth are functionally illiterate, and approximately 2 to 5 percent of our nation's youth are functionally illiterate, by the eighth grade [Lipham & Klausmeier, 1976a]."

The developers of IGE argued that the negative conditions pointed to in these statistics occur because many conventional schools

1. routinize and trivialize instruction--"Students are required to adjust to uniform educational programs. Provisions for differences in rate of learning, style of learning, and other characteristics are inadequate."
2. sort children through standardized testing practices--"Students are frequently evaluated using norm-referenced tests of intellectual ability and educational achievement, and these tests are often used merely for categorizing and grading students, not for improving their instruction."
3. produce nonreflective and routinized professional work--"Teachers spend nearly all their time throughout the school day with children, leaving little time for planning and evaluating instructional activities. The staff spends most of its energy in keeping school going, and little effort is devoted to research and development activities that are essential to continuous improvement of educational practice."
4. remove parents from any meaningful relationship to the school "Parent contact with the schools is largely negative; it is concerned primarily with problems of school finance or student discipline, and the primary means for communication between the school and the home is by report cards or parent-teacher conferences, supplemented occasionally by a school newsletter [Klausmeier, 1977]."

In an attempt to solve these problems, Individually Guided Education (IGE) incorporated two major and interrelated strands of educational thought. One was the use of management technologies borrowed from the

industrial sector to develop a school organization which made instructional programming and professional activities more efficient and, hopefully, more effective. The other was the application of individual difference research from educational psychology to provide greater flexibility in the learning processes of individual children.

The designers of IGE at the Wisconsin R & D Center argued that the new curriculum (including the use of behavioral objectives and criterion-referenced tests) and organizational approach would produce new patterns of educational conduct, values, and attitudes. The program would instill a sense of intellectual vitality, critical thought, and personal responsibility into students' work. Professional activities would be marked by a sense of participation, an active searching for new information, and an infusion of new processes and skills.

A major organizational change in the IGE school is the focus upon units instead of individual classrooms. Each unit consists of 75-150 children, approximately four teachers, some combination of student-teachers or aides and each has a multi-aged grouping of children. In addition, a specific teacher in each unit assumes leadership responsibility for administration and educational planning.

Curriculum planning within a unit is conceived around an Instructional Programming MOdel (IPM) which contains seven planning steps (Figure 1). The instructional model provides a rational approach to managing and evaluating instructional processes and directs attention to predefining instructional objectives, developing varied and interesting materials, grouping according to ability or interest levels and

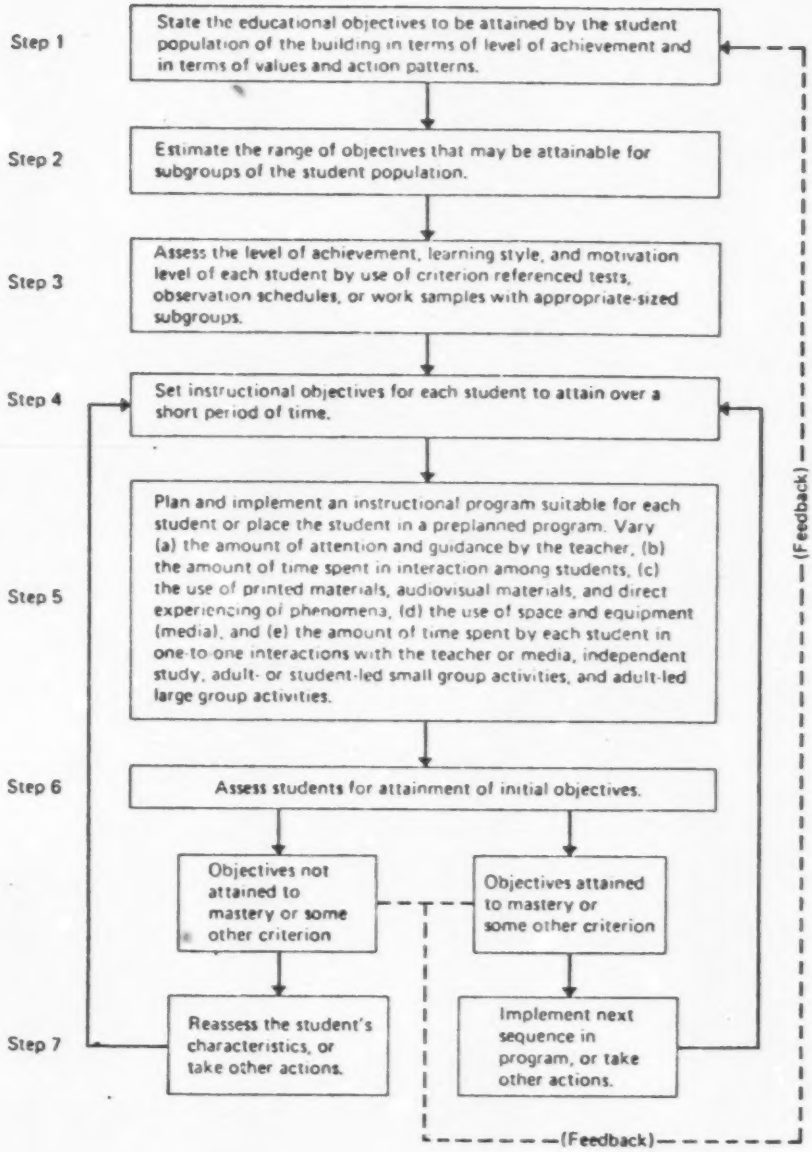
Step 1
State the educational objectives to be attained by the student population of the building in terms of level of achievement and in terms of values and action patterns.
Step 2
Estimate the range of objectives that may be attainable for subgroups of the student population.
Step 3
Assess the level of achievement, learning style, and motivation level of each student by use of criterion referenced tests, observation schedules, or work samples with appropriate-sized subgroups.
Step 4
Set instructional objectives for each student to attain over a short period of time.
Step 5
Plan and implement an instructional program suitable for each student or place the student in a preplanned program. Vary (a) the amount of attention and guidance by the teacher, (b) the amount of time spent in interaction among students, (c) the use of printed materials, audiovisual materials, and direct experiencing of phenomena, (d) the use of space and equipment (media), and (e) the amount of time spent by each student in one-to-one interactions with the teacher or media, independent study, adult- or student-led small group activities, and adult-led large group activities.
Step 6
Assess students for attainment of initial objectives.
Objectives not attained to mastery or some other criterion
Objectives attained to mastery or some other criterion
Step 7
Reassess the student's characteristics, or take other actions.
Implement next sequence in program, or take other actions.
(Feedback)
(Feedback)

Figure 1. The instructional programming model in IGE. From Lipham and Klausmeier, 1976b, p. 65.

developing appropriate evaluation procedures through criterion-referenced measures to assess whether objectives have been reached.

The reform purposes of the unit organization are manifold. The unit provides an efficient format for grouping and regrouping children according to the objectives of instruction and their individual level of mastery. With several teachers and aides available, several groups can be run concurrently, allowing for greater individualization.

The unit also provides a small, designated professional group which can assume professional responsibilities, such as planning, developing materials, and evaluation. To increase teacher's involvement in school-wide decisions, unit leaders meet with the principal to discuss school-wide concerns. The various units and committees in the school are linked to district, state, and national organizations to encourage critical thinking and professional responsibility.

Teachers' involvement in planning at all levels of schooling contribute to what the planners call renewal. The practices of IGE are not only to provide change in school programs but to create a dynamic organizational process in which professionals can continually evaluate and rethink their practices and ideas.

Many advocates of IGE saw the combination of new curriculum and organizational stragegies as altering the underlying institutional characteristics of schooling (Chase, 1976). The specific strategies and procedures of IGE can be viewed in relation to this purpose. Routinization and standardization found in school were to be eliminated through flexible grouping and an instructional programming model to respond to differences among children. The reorganization of classes into units,

it was thought, would provide an administrative arrangement which would help professionals become more thoughtful, creative, and responsible in their approaches to teaching and learning. By incorporating parents and community members into school programs, a closer relationship between community and school could be achieved. The specific stragegies of IGE, therefore, are created to give expression to deeper educational purposes. They present one of many possible approaches to changing institutions.

II. INSTITUTIONAL LIFE AS THE FOCUS OF REFORM

The task of educational reform addressed in the formulation of IGE refers to the problem of institutional life. The concept of institutional reform suggests that there is a gap between the values people hold for an institution and what actually occurs. Reform implies that changes will occur that will make the enterprise better. The concept of institution refers to some patterned way of life that confronts people with certain expectations, demands, and consistent emotions and attitudes.[1] The potency of institutional patterns is that they contain underlying structures that channel both the thought and action of their participants. The various components of IGE, therefore, were a response to concerns about underlying characteristics of school life. The procedures and instructional systems of the reform were intended to substantively change the underlying rules and procedures by which schools are given coherence and meaning.

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[1] The notion of institution is discussed in Berger and Luchmann, 1966.

The complexity of the problem confronting educational reformers can be understood by considering more fully the nature of institutional life. The concept of institution directs attention to what is learned in school as more than its subject matter or skills. The activities of schooling involve children participating in a social world. That world contains regularized activities that produce roles, and with those roles status, privileges, and knowledge. To be a student in a school means, for example, that one must deal with certain types of relationships, materials, and expectations. A teacher might define a lesson objective as "A student will identify four causes of the Civil War" or "A student will identify a main idea in a paragraph." While participating in the activities in which these objectives are realized, however, the student also learns how to be competent in school, what it means to study, and the degree of responsibility he or she should take in directing his or her learning. Classroom objectives and organizational procedures do not exist independently of a complex and ongoing social world of expectations, demands, attitudes, and emotions.

The significance of institutional settings to be considered in reform is that they have the power to direct individuals in forming "identity." Institutional patterns evoke various symbol systems--theories, folk knowledge, myth, and common sense ideas. These symbol systems make the ongoing activities, roles, and relationships appear as normal and reasonable ways of acting within that setting. The "real scoop" given to new teachers about how to work with children, for example, typifies a way in which a teacher acquires a practical knowledge about what is permissible and desirable in the role of teacher.

Theories of learning can also be viewed as more than descriptions about knowledge acquisition. The theories of learning are thought of as sensible statements because of the background information people have about schools and classrooms. The special theoretical and folk knowledge mentioned above also suggests that there is a special distribution of knowledge within institutions. Different people need to have different types of knowledge. It is expected that a teacher needs to know different things from a student or a parent.

The knowledge imparted in institutions can be viewed as having many different layers. One of these layers is the surface layer of meaning. It consists of the publicly accepted criteria or standards by which people judge success or failure. Another layer is the underlying layer or the interpretive rules. This layer involves the socially accepted procedures or guidelines that people use to give themselves a feeling of security and certainty. These are the assumptions about what ought to be. Educational reform can be understood more fully when the surface and underlying layers of institutional life are considered together.

The following example will illustrate the relationship between the surface and the underlying levels: A teacher plans a lesson in mathematics, he or she writes an objective, constructs some materials, teaches, and then evaluates the lesson. The lesson is considered important for the students because the mathematics facts have intrinsically challenging qualities, are related to previous and later material, and are part of the content of a standardized test that measures students' achievement. These reasons may be offered as legitimizing the lesson.

For our purpose, these reasons provide the surface meaning, or reason for teaching the lesson. We need also to look at the underlying layer. The surface reasons for teaching the lesson are developed and supported within a context of institutional patterns and beliefs. There are certain rules and procedures that exist prior to any actual lesson which are used to interpret the ongoing activities of the school. The rules reflect assumptions about the way children learn and develop, about the nature of knowledge, and about social order and control.

Esland (1971), for example, identifies implicit epistemologies of two dominant educational psychologies that guide classroom instruction. One, drawn from the psychometric tradition, assumes that knowledge exists outside the minds of individuals. This external knowledge is identified and given to children. A second tradition, closely related to developmental psychology, focuses, in part, on knowledge arising out of participation in a community and the problem-solving process. Instruction in this tradition focuses upon reasoning and cognitive development applied to the classroom environment. Each psychology contains implicit assumptions about the role of individuals in society: one sees individuals as receptors of social values; the other views individuals as creating social values through active participation in social institutions.

The assumptions are the assumed part of institutional patterns. They influence the way the teacher interprets (sees) the problem of being a teacher and how the children interpret the role of student. The underlying assumptions are rarely examined or challenged; they are a taken-for-granted part of schooling.

The task confronting educational reform/renewal involves considering more closely the institutional quality of school life. Schools operate on underlying assumptions, values, and patterns which order school experiences. The strategies of reform are designed to change these institutional patterns in light of educational purposes. For example, unitized classrooms, instructional management systems, or use of criterion-referenced tests, as in IGE, are technologies designed to influence the underlying patterns of schooling and provide greater integrity to school activities. They are not ends or outcomes of reform. To be effective, therefore, reform must relate the inteplay of reform technologies and institutional life to the larger educational purposes defined.

III. FOCI OF REFORM: UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS OF SCHOOL LIFE

The problem of reform/renewal of the institutional quality of school life can be given greater clarity by focusing upon the underlying characteristics which have been identified as working against the intent of education. These are (1) a batch processing of students to produce standardized educational experiences, (2) the emphasizing of knowledge which favors certain groups and handicaps others; and (3) the functioning of professional groups to protect their prerogatives. The challenge of educational reform is, in fundamental ways, to challenge the assumptions, values, and patterns of work that produce these underlying characteristics.

One of the major characteristics of schools, some researchers argue, is their need to process large numbers of students within a relatively contained space. Silberman (1970), for example, found instructional programs maintaining a uniformity and conformity that eliminates

individual creativity and spontaneity, that paralyzes intellectual curiosity and rewards acquiesence to authority. Jackson's (1968) study of elementary classrooms also found the major educational problem to be grouping and processing students. Controlling a great number of individuals produced a form of spectatorship in which most students spent their time in school waiting for teachers' directions. Little actual classroom time was spent in trying to understand subject matter.

The relationship between school structures and educational experiences is illuminated by Philip Cusick's (1973) study of a high school. Cusick's initial concern was with the student culture of the high school. He soon became aware that the students' activities in school had little or nothing to do with the academics of the school. Students cared little about school activity, talked infrequently about academics, and spent little time actually involved in the productive work of learning. When these students' actions are placed in the social context of the institution, they can be viewed as normal responses to a situation that denies students freedom, routinizes activities, and fails to differentiate among students regardless of class, sequence, or academic rank. Further, the hierarchical arrangements of batch processing of students produces little teacher-student interaction or student involvement. Students are relegated to positions of watchers, waiters, order-followers, and passive receivers of knowledge.

The concern for standardization and control in school is summarized by a review of a 1970 Carnegie Commission report.

> Most schools are preoccupied with order, control, and routine for the sake of routine; that students essentially are subjugated by the schools; that by practicing systematic repression,

> the schools create many of their own discipline problems; and that they promote docility, passivity, and conformity in their students . . .
>
> The teachers are said to be treated as subservient employees whose job is to take orders and punch the time clock every day, and whose competence is judged not by what and how their students learn, but by how well they control their classes . . . . Teachers assume that pupils cannot be trusted to act in their own best interests . . . and principals make similar assumptions about teachers . . . . Teachers become primarily disciplinarians, and discipline is defined as "the absence of noise and movement." . . . One result of all this . . . is to destroy students' curiosity along with their ability--more serious, their desire--to think and act for themselves . . . . It is not the children who are disruptive . . . it is the formal classroom that is disruptive--of childhood itself [Stevens, 1972, pp. 5-7].

A second form of school criticism has focused upon the types of knowledge taught in the school. Young (1971), his colleagues in England (Brown, 1973), and some American researchers have viewed schools as institutions that distribute and maintain certain types of knowledge. Drawing upon the sociology of knowledge, Young argues that the relationship between the teacher and student is essentially a reality-sharing, world-building enterprise. As participants in the classroom interact, they develop vocabularies and knowledge by which they interpret the actions of one another and future experiences. This shared understanding is based upon implicit value structures which define for teachers and pupils what being "educated" means. The knowledge learned, Young argues, has implications beyond school affairs. School knowledge maintains a posture toward existing social and political arrangements.

Keddie (1971), a colleague of Young, employs this framework in her study of the nature of discourse in an English high school. Keddie found that instruction frequently replaced what children knew as part of their

everyday knowledge with a non-common sense, esoteric language of the school. For example, Keddie observed, the teacher might reject a pupil's description of an extended family which was derived from his or her personal experience. In its place, the teacher seeks to have the child accept his or her category system that is built around social science words. The stated purpose of the lesson is to have children learn scientific categories as heuristic devices for inquiry. According to Keddie, the result has little to do with inquiry. Instruction was designed to have students accept as authoritative the teacher's system of thought and abstraction.

An assumption behind the instruction in the above study was that children have no competence in reasoning. MacKay (1973) examines this point through another study of the dialogue of a reading lesson. A teacher asks, "What did it say in the story about Chicken Little, ah, where the nut fell on Chicken Little?" The child's response to the question, "at the tree," is a reasonable answer to the question. However, the teacher's answer was, "umhum what part of his body did it land on, did it say?" The teacher preempted the interaction, treated the child's answer as incorrect and assigned his own scheme of interpretation, without any explanation. The purpose of instruction, again, was to impose upon children a peculiar way of reasoning and notion of competence.

The knowledge distributed in schools can be interpreted as having implications beyond the specific patterns of schooling. Young, for example, argues that the basic form and substance of schools is one of cultural transmission and social control. He suggests that methods of selection, organization, and assessment of school knowledge often serve

particular ideological functions. School knowledge maximizes certain cultural knowledge. Instruction also legitimizes the position and privileges of those experts and elites whose knowledge becomes incorporated into schooling. From this perspective, the standardization of experiences discussed previously is seen as a normal response to the technical knowledge emphasized in the larger social and political world.

The political meaning of classroom communication can be illuminated when viewed in relation to the organization of curriculum content. Materials are not selected and organized outside of a value system and the resulting content of curriculum emerges with nuances of language that convey particular meanings. Anyon (1976), for example, found that American history textbooks support ideologies of corporate business and their elites. My own analysis of social studies curricula (Popkewitz, 1977) found that the teaching strategies and curriculum content had reference to particular social and political forms. The curriculum materials were organized to define social responsibility as maintaining the stability and harmony of existing social and political institutions. Further, instructional strategies legitimized the role of the professional in defining social issues and strategies for social change. The political values in the curriculum were crystalized under the false rubric of inquiry.

The work of the sociologist of school knowledge directs us to consider two dimensions of the knowledge being distributed in schools. The first dimension is related to the ideological question of whose knowledge is being distributed. That is, what interests in schools and the society-at-large are being served or handicapped by the knowledge

imparted? While this question is important and central to the understanding of schools, educational reform cannot, by itself, effectively deal with the question. A second dimension is how knowledge is conceived of and used in the school. Both the Keddie and MacKay studies provide a classroom portrait of knowledge being treated as fixed and unchanging, to be given to children as one fills up an empty vessel. Further, the intellectual drama, mystery, and adventure contained in scholarly work is transformed for children into learning exercises that impose a knower's scheme of reasoning and unstated values and assumptions.

From the perspective of the sociology of educational knowledge, the previously discussed standardization of school work exists and assumes meaning within a larger social and political context. School processes maintain and distribute knowledge about social roles and relations. Efforts toward reform, therefore, involve consideration of how the organization of curriculum content, instruction, and evaluation give legitimacy to definitions of social order and control.

A third underlying characteristic of schooling is the tendency of professional groups to protect their prerogatives from public encroachment. Professionalism is a social category. It denotes certain status and privilege within society. Hughes (1958), for example, views professionalism as a special occupation that is perceived as granting a license from society to perform certain functions. The occupations of medicine, law, and teaching are viewed as having a mandate to act upon clients in ways not permitted in other forms of social interactions.

The history of professionalism is one of increasing encroachment by professionals over private sectors of life (Bledstein, 1976; Lasch,

1977). In many instances, the needs served by professionals are invented by the experts rather than arising in response to needs expressed by the clients. Moral causes, such as temperance and restrictions against masturbation, for example, were made professional responsibilities as they were socially redefined as medical problems. The expanding professional mandates are legitimatized through carefully established spaces, rituals, and ceremonies that set apart, regulate and control specific domains of social life. The helping professions, in particular, have used scientific technology and language to create a sense of awe among their clients and a perceived sense of power among practitioners. The culture of professionalism, some argue, has undermined the capacity of individuals to provide for themselves while justifying the expert's expanse into and control of new sectors of society.

Studies of schooling tend to suggest that professionals use their power to conserve and expand their control and to resist changes in power relationships. The decentralization fights in New York City in the late 1960's and 1970's, for example, reflected the desire of teacher and administrative groups to prevent lay involvement in certain "teacher domains." Becker's (1952) study of parent involvement in Chicago schools reported that teachers tended to react to the problem of parent involvement in ways that preserved their own control and status in the institution. Much of the bureaucratization of schooling in recent years has tended to further legitimize professional expertise at the expense of lay involvement. The use of technical language, increased

specialization, and greater hierarchical differentiation of school personnel, made the work of teaching seem more esoteric and thus less amenable to outside influence.[2]

The institutional dimensions discussed above provide general criteria by which to consider the success or failure of strategies for educational reform. Successful change must be able to challenge the standardization produced through the batching of children, the distribution of knowledge that imposes a world that is certain and fixed, and the tendency of professionals to work towards inertia.

IV. HOW TO PERSEVERE WITHOUT REALLY TRYING: THE RESILIENCY OF INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

Institutional patterns impose complex social and political arrangements that are not easily altered. We assume, for example, that because a planner intends to produce change or because an administrator says this is the year for "xy," the program is implemented as intended. In fact, much program evaluation is based upon that assumption. A control and experimental group are established, pre-and posttests are given, and the test outcomes are used to determine the success of the program. However, when we examine the social contexts into which the reform is introduced, the assumption of implementation can be questioned.

The resiliency of institutions to efforts toward reform can be understood by considering the history of planned school change. First,

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[2]This is discussed in relation to political meanings of efforts to reform schools of the poor. See T. Popkewitz, 1975.

innovations are incorporated into existing patterns of behavior and belief. Second, reforms function as slogan systems in which the innovations actually legitimate the ongoing patterns of educational conduct.

The innovations introduced by reform cannot be treated as entities which exist outside of their social use. Reforms are made a part of social situations in which people have hopes, desires, and interests, and in which institutional contexts structure actions. The programs interact with the routines and beliefs of schools, sometimes providing surface changes but leaving the underlying interpretive rules unchallenged.

Attempts to introduce a comprehensive school system in Sweden illustrate the resiliency of institutions towards reform efforts. Between 1940 and 1971, Sweden undertook to develop a comprehensive school system which would institute curriculum practices and an organizational framework that would "contribute to social justice by making education available to all regardless of social background [Kallos & Lundgren, 1976]." As a part of this commitment, the "gymnasium," "continuation," and "vocational" schools were combined into one school form. In addition, curriculum innovations were proposed to develop a more integrative approach to instruction--one which included team-teaching of subject matter and the redefinition of the role of teacher as a "facilitating and understanding agent."

The intent of the Swedish reform was never implemented. Curriculum developers did not consider the need to relate the organizational frameworks to the content of the curriculum. The politics of governmental

agencies, administrative professional groups, and teacher belief systems produced a situation in which the "old" curriculum routines were brought into the new comprehensive high schools. Teachers emphasized traditional subjects and recitation patterns. Further, they adapted to the heterogeneous groups in the comprehensive school in ways that did not challenge the dominant ideology of students as "passive receptacles" which receive content. The new curriculum was intended to provide forms of individualization to deal with individual differences and variety; teachers redefined that interest to conform to old expectations. They omitted parts of the curriculum, lowered goals, and formed remediation groups. A teaching category, "remediation teacher," was invented to handle those individuals who did not meet the predefined standards and goals. The comprehensive school plan to create a series of options for teachers and students did not materialize.

As with the Swedish case, an extensive reform in the British Isles sought a redefinition of high school instruction through the development of an integrated science curriculum (Hamilton, 1975) which unified physics, chemistry, and biology into a single course of study. The innovation went beyond the course content. The planners sought to introduce a discovery method which relied upon students learning through research. In addition, multiple forms of evaluation were to be used to understand student attitudes, interests, and skills as well as their acquisition of knowledge.

When the integrated curriculum was introduced into two Scottish schools, David Hamilton suggests it was transformed: "its wisdom was filtered through the organizational structure of the school, science

department, and classrooms [Hamilton, 1975, p. 30]." At the district level, teachers were differentiated in a manner which maintained assumptions in opposition to the intention of curriculum. Teachers with graduate level training, for example, were paid higher salaries and received promotions to head departments. Within the schools various decisions were made which helped to rigidify instruction. For example, a memo was drafted in one of the Scottish schools which provided a precise schedule by which the content should be taught. A consequence of the memo was the production of a uniform pacing and patterning of the curriculum. Teachers who shared science equipment continued the patterning by restricting usage to certain times. Further, test schedules were devised by departments which relied solely upon multiple-choice questions. Hamilton concludes that while the teacher is important in the selective amplifying and transmitting of knowledge, his or her influence is not limitless. It is bounded by a series of intervening institutional constraints.

Similar experiences of intervening institutional constraints can be found in this country with the development of the new curriculum projects in the 1960's (Sarason, 1971; Goodlad, J., Klein, N., & Frances, M., 1970). Many of the new science materials, for example, were put into the closets of classrooms, and are yet to be unwrapped. Teachers of the "new" math tended to use the materials in ways that continued the same teaching strategies and presentation of content found in the "old" math. The intent to instill excietment, adventure, and intellectual curiosity into school programs never materialized as the new curriculum was integrated into the ongoing activities of school.

The irony of many educational reforms is that the program intended to challenge institutional characteristics is transformed so that it conserves existing beliefs and patterns (Popkewitz, 1975, 1978). The legitimizing function of reform can be understood by focusing upon the nature of slogan systems. To talk about individualization, discovery approaches, or participation is to provide a symbol which condenses a variety of emotions and values into a single word or set of words. A slogan (e.g. "individualization") works in education in a manner similar to the function of a slogan in the political world. A word such as democracy or national security provides a way of symbolizing the values and aspirations of a group. Slogans, however, do not tell us what is actually proposed. In some cases, the slogan does accurately express and compress the meanings of the potential actions. In other cases, the slogan obscures the concrete actions and motives of the people involved. For example, Medicare provides greater benefits to the doctors who participate than to the poor who are publicly its beneficiaries. Reform in this instance is "successful" in that it produces an aura of change without substantively restricting those who give direction to and gain from the existing organization of social affairs. Reform can be a symbolic act that conserves rather than changes.

The idea of community participation in the War on Poverty is an example of the legitimization of existing practices through slogan systems. The intent of reforms in welfare, economic, education, and political agencies was to provide the poor with power over the decisions that affected their lives and their community. The poor distrusted professionals and felt alienated and disenfranchised. It was reasoned

that active participation would have structural effects upon the distribution of community power and produce psychological effects that would eliminate the dependency associated with poverty. Actually, we find that most agencies were organized to limit participation to an advisory level (Rose, 1972). Procedures were developed which enabled the agencies to expand their existing programs and to provide mechanisms which involved community representatives in "selling" the very program that was to be changed. In few agencies were existing programs viewed as the target of change.

In the same way, national efforts to improve the quality of education in poor communities often result in making existing programs seem reasonable yet "different." For example, the purpose of the Teacher Corps, an agency of the U.S. Office of Education, is to increase educational opportunities for those who have suffered economically and socially. The very manner in which the projects are funded and monitored, however, helps to maintain an organizational bias which favors those who already have power to define educational policy--those with power in the school systems. In one Native American Teacher Corps project, for example, schools were to enter into shared decision making with local community representatives (Popkewitz, 1975). Further, the project included Native American aides to work in schools. These activities, though, were given particular meanings by the staffs of the schools. The school was perceived as a moralizing agency and the moral system was that of the white community. The teachers saw "reform" as eliminating pathological qualities in Native American community life.

The rituals of participation in the program helped to enlist community support.

As the previous research indicates, the problem confronting educational reformers is complex and profound. Schools contain systems of thought, action, and privilege which resist efforts to change. Efforts to change become slogans and rituals that are often incorporated into the existing order. The rituals create an illusion that the school is responding to its constituency while the needs and interests actually being served are those embedded in the structures at the school. Reform efforts, therefore, must continually be considered in light of the intent implicit in proposed change strategies and how those strategies are used in institutional arrangements.

While we have not considered macro-implications of institutional change, a brief note should be provided here. The patterns of schooling are not self-contained structures. They exist in relation to larger social arrangements. Current school forms, for example, may emphasize particular cultural knowledge and interests, especially that knowledge required in an industrial society (Apple, forthcoming). That cultural knowledge may legitimize the role of experts or professionals and limit the responsibility of individuals in social affairs. Further, the patterns of schooling are historically rooted. They have developed from particular social concerns and public issues of past eras (Feinberg, 1977; Carnoy, 1974). As that past is routinized and made a part of the ongoing life of schooling, the routines assume a normalcy and tradition which makes them seemingly impervious to scrutiny. The interplay of

current social practices to the past and to larger social structures introduces complex elements which influence the nature and character of educational reform.

V. CONCLUSIONS: IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

The difficulty of changing the institutional quality of school life poses a special problem to educational researchers and evaluators: How can the effectiveness of reforms be assessed? Earlier, we spoke about the intent of IGE to institutionally reform schools. To achieve this purpose, its planners have developed a comprehensive plan that seeks to interrelate organizational and instructional dimensions of schooling. These reform stragegies, however, should be considered as they relate to the underlying social meanings of institutional life.

The critical appraisal of the effect of reform upon the institutional character of schools raises certain methodological issues. The empirical problem confronting educators is somewhat different from the conventional wisdom of research and evaluation. The traditional approach assumes there are precisely defined variables prior to the attempt to evaluate (Romberg & Fox, 1976; Fox, 1976). The research question is one of choosing which variable to manipulate, instituting some form of testing, and comparing the responses to determine whether the strategies were successful. In contrast, the problem here is more one of looking into the meanings and interpretations school participants give to reform practices. We cannot assume that reform practices are used in ways defined in the program literature. Nor can researchers

make any assumptions at this point about how people in the schools actually construct and practice reform programs on a day-to-day basis.

One methodology useful for looking into questions about institutional life is field study (Popkewitz & Wehlage, 1977). This approach is used by community sociologists and cultural ethnographers (See Tabachnick, 1976; Schatzman & Strauss, 1973). The focus of study is upon the natural flow of the events that occur in a social context such as a school. A variety of data collection techniques such as observations, interviews, document analysis, and, sometimes, surveys are used. The purpose of the data collection is to understand the interplay of feelings and emotions produced through participation in institutional life, the specific language people use to explain their work, and the actual patterns of conduct which guide their day-to-day affairs. The research is concerned with the whole and how the parts relate to that whole.

This method of field study has particular advantages for understanding the relationship of reform practices to the institutional quality of schools. Briefly stated, these advantages are

1. It permits a closeness to the people and events. The researcher has access not only to what people report are beliefs about human differences, individualization, or teaching, but how those beliefs are actually used to guide the work of teachers and students. For example, literature on individualization suggests that teachers should provide a variety of instructional strategies to respond to differences in children's interest. The task of research is not to accept that this

occurs and look for examples of individualization. Rather, research should be concerned with the actual work of teaching, to see where a teacher applies the notion of individualization, and what the underlying beliefs and rules of the situation are. The obligation of a researcher is to understand how the language and technologies of reform are given expression and value within the contexts of school life.

2. Researchers should give attention to unanticipated, unintended, and unwilled consequences of social action. The federal attempts towards social change and educational reform suggest that social affairs are not linear, sequential, or fully "rational." The outcomes of interventions are always in doubt and result from a multiple of dimensions which are neither correlational nor fully causal. Field methods provide researchers with techniques which enable them to become sensitive to what outcomes do occur and why things seem to happen that way.

3. Study of naturally occurring situations can enable researchers to consider different types of motivation for actions brought to a situation. One type of motivation is the purposes individuals bring to a situation. Another type is the needs produced by the situation itself; that is, how the objective conditions of institutional life shape and fashion individual choice. It is in understanding the dialectical nature of these two "causes" of human action that the reform task can be more intelligently considered.

To summarize, the focus of this discussion has been upon educational reform as a problem altering the institutional quality of schools. Specific curriculum designs and organizational elements of reforms such as IGE cannot be viewed as ends or outcomes. The use of criterion-

referenced measures, behavioral objectives, or mastery learning are technologies that are proposed in relation to ethical concerns about schools. The intent of the technologies is to change deeply held assumptions and patterns which constitute life in schools. In considering reform in this manner, educational planning involves giving attention to the social, political, and educational complexity of schooling. Further, methodological issues are raised about appropriate research and evaluation procedures. It has been suggested that field study can give attention to the relation between reform practices and the underlying institutional characteristics of school.

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